

The text of this document is an accurate copy of what was filed by the initiative proponent with the Secretary of State for assignment of a serial number. The accuracy of code in amendatory sections has not been verified.

## **INITIATIVE 290**

I, Sam Reed, Secretary of State of the State of Washington and custodian of its seal, hereby certify that, according to the records on file in my office, the attached copy of Initiative Measure No. 290 to the Legislature is a true and correct copy as it was received by this office.

AN ACT Relating to limiting property taxes; adding a section to chapter 84.55 RCW; amending RCW 84.55.0101; and creating new sections.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

### **POLICIES AND PURPOSES**

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The 25% Property Tax Initiative will bring long-overdue property tax relief. This measure would reduce the state property tax levy by 25% in 2004 and all years thereafter and require voter approval for any property tax levy increase. For decades, property taxes have skyrocketed in Washington. Rising property taxes have placed an incredible financial burden on taxpayers, especially working class families and senior citizens. Sky-high property taxes prevent many of our citizens from attaining the American dream of home ownership. Meaningful property tax relief is long-overdue and desperately needed. During these tough economic times, struggling families and senior citizens desperately need and deserve meaningful property tax relief. Because of huge property tax spikes in recent years, for many property owners, this measure will only put property taxes at the same level they were two or three years ago. But we have to start somewhere. And because of economic growth, government grows several billion dollars every year. So even with the 25% Property Tax Initiative, government will continue to grow but simply at a slower rate.

### **REDUCING THE STATE PROPERTY TAX LEVY BY 25%**

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 84.55 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The state property tax levy for collection in 2004 and all years thereafter shall be reduced by 25.0 percent of the levy amount that would otherwise be allowed under this chapter without regard to this section.

(2) Before applying the reduction in the state property tax levy required by this section, levies shall be set every year at the amount that would otherwise be allowed under this chapter without regard to the prior years' reductions provided for in this section.

#### **REQUIRING VOTER APPROVAL FOR PROPERTY TAX INCREASES**

**Sec. 3.** RCW 84.55.0101 and 2002 c 1 s 3 are each amended to read as follows:

Upon a finding of substantial need, the legislative authority of a taxing district other than the state may provide for the use of a limit factor under this chapter of one hundred (({- one -})) percent or less unless an increase greater than this limit is approved by the voters at an election as provided in RCW 84.55.050. In districts with legislative authorities of four members or less, two-thirds of the members must approve an ordinance or resolution under this section. In districts with more than four members, a majority plus one vote must approve an ordinance or resolution under this section. The new limit factor shall be effective for taxes collected in the following year only.

#### **CONSTRUCTION CLAUSE**

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The provisions of this act are to be liberally construed to effectuate the policies, purposes, and intent of this act.

#### **SEVERABILITY CLAUSE**

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** If any provision of this act of its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

#### **LEGISLATIVE INTENT**

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** The people have made clear through the passage of numerous initiatives and referenda that taxes need to be reasonable and tax increases should always be a last resort. However, politicians throughout the state of Washington continue to ignore these repeated mandates.

Politicians are reminded:

1) All political power is vested in the people, as stated in Article I, section 1 of the Washington state Constitution.

2) The first power reserved by the people is the initiative, as stated in Article II, section 1 of the Washington state Constitution.

3) When voters approve initiatives, politicians have a moral, ethical and constitutional obligation to fully implement them. When politicians ignore this obligation, they corrupt the term "public servant."

4) Any attempt to violate the clear intent and spirit of this measure undermines the trust of the people in their government and will increase the likelihood of future tax limitation measures.

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